PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

If I could catch and hold part of the enthusiasm of Putnam Chapter's, Charlie McCall, and send each individual member just a little bit of that "Precious something" that bubbles forth from him at the mention of Hibiscus and Spring, I am sure I would have found the "magic bullet." Preparing his plants is certainly a labor of love.....probably I should say pampering his plants.

He has been good enough to write down a step by step procedure for members wishing to win all of the top awards in the coming shows. Although, in reading his copy I see he has not mentioned that possibly the greatest ingredient of all is the love he puts into his wonderful blossoms, I want to tell everyone that Charlie does not spare the horses when he uses this magic protion in caring for his plants.

There is a challenge in the coming of Spring, when nature awakens all of the flowers and birds in a lavish splash of color and song. Each of us can be part of this masterpiece and share the joy of it all if we can capture some of the unrestrained enthusiasm of Charlie McCall for getting outdoors and helping nature in the business of making the world a more beautiful and inviting place for living.

There are wonderful, wonderful neighbors near you. Many of them would revel in the fine times that we of the American Hibiscus Society enjoy, if you would take the message to them, let them know that they are wanted and welcome in our group. That we want our communities to be full of lovely flowers and that it is a service we try to give the places in which we live and love, the warm, wonderful friendships we are privileged to enjoy are their's for the having.

Lowell, in his Rhapsody on Spring says:

"It is not what we give, but what we share!"

If we can keep this as a central thought as we go about our daily tasks, I am sure our lives will be brimming over with happiness, satisfaction and love.

"With the kiss of the Sun for pardon
And the song of the birds for mirth!
We're nearer God in the heart of a
garden
Than anywhere on earth!"

Si,

CULTURE

CHARLIE McCALL LAYS IT ON THE LINE FOR NORTH AREA.

This is an alert to all gardeners! Spring is the beginning of the Hibiscus hear. There are things to do at this time that will pay dividends later in healthy plants and beautiful specimen bloom.

Let us begin at the beginning, before starting cultivation procedure the main thing is to start with healthy, well grown stock. This should be the basis on which you begin your garden. The American Hibiscus Society can give a hearty salute to the many high class, ethical nurserymen within our group. Let me salute a few....my neighbors and friends, honest men, devoted to the best ethics and honesty anyone could wish. There is John Sparkman, Frank White and wonderful Tom Hudson, who has given so much to the beauty we enjoy. These are just a beginning. There are wonderful nurserymen near you, or you may be one. Their gilt edged stock will give you a good beginning and get your Hibiscus off on the right foot.

Now that we have established that nothing but the best will do to begin with, let us give a blue print for the amateur or professional, that will pay off in reward winning flowers and incomparable beauty.

Cut back your Hibiscus the third week in February. It has often been advised that wood which has suffered cold damage should be cut back immediately. I do not find this to be the best practice. Hibiscus should be banked at least twenty inches high in November. Before I start that bank I pour two or three pounds of Hybrotite, right down through the center of the plant to find lodgment at the base of same. Then I throw up the bank from the soil near the plant, but without disturbing the root system of the specimen. The base of this bank will be a couple of feet from the base of the plant and will go well up into the limbs of the plant. This is the Electric Blanket we throw around Hibiscus to keep them safe through the winter.